



## The Awards are still raising the bar

### Results from a survey about the 2021 Awards

After running the Awards for 16 years, we want to make sure that the Awards continue to fulfil their aims to:

- improve government and business documents so that all New Zealanders can understand them
- raise public awareness of the need for, and benefits of, plain language
- create a public preference for organisations that choose to communicate in plain language.

So we regularly survey our Awards winners, finalists, and sponsors. The feedback tells us a lot about how plain language is perceived and gives us valuable ideas on how we can improve the Awards process.

#### Why we survey the people who support us

We again wanted to check why our valued sponsors support the Plain English Awards, and why our volunteer judges put so much of their valuable time into judging. We also wanted to know why our winners and finalists entered the 2021 Awards, and what the Awards mean to them. Finally, we also wanted to hear from those who were interested in viewing the ceremony without being nominated.

We asked respondents:

- what motivated them to, sponsor, judge, or enter the 2021 Plain English Awards
- what benefits they enjoy by sponsoring, judging, or entering the Awards
- what benefits the Awards bring to the people they serve or communicate with
- what benefits the Awards bring to the New Zealand public.

The rest of this report summarises the main themes from the responses.

#### The pandemic has positively affected the plain language movement

We've seen lots of evidence to show that, around the world, the importance of plain language communication is clear. Many of our finalists this year have been carrying out vital work in healthcare and social services, leading the way in showing care and empathy in their writing.

One finalist explained that ‘by recognising the value of plain English [the Awards] generate a groundswell towards its widespread use. This means the public will be able to easily understand important communications — sometimes it can mean the difference between life and death!’

One of our ceremony attendees, Sherralynne Smith from Lockheed Martin New Zealand, wrote that ‘clear and succinct communication is vital for health and safety. When people understand and can grasp principles, the rewards can be unparalleled’.

Supporting the Awards is a ‘win–win situation’ for sponsors

Our sponsors are motivated to take part in the Awards because, alongside raising awareness of their brand, the opportunity allows them to raise awareness of the benefits of plain language.

Emma Harding from Streamliners said that the Awards allows them to show ‘the people we collaborate with that plain English is a “thing” and important ... and show our staff that we value good writing’.

Shelly Davies, our Awards Brand Ambassador and sponsor, believes that taking part in the Awards helped her to promote the cause of plain English, which she considers to be ‘a great kaupapa’. She also says that it gave her clients ‘something to be excited about’.

One of our judges explained that the Awards are a way to make the public aware of an organisation’s hard work. It can be hard to get the public excited about plain language. After all, if you’re doing clear communication well, no one should notice the writing!

Entrants identified many benefits, including the feedback they received from world-class writers

One of our judges pointed out that entering the Awards means receiving detailed feedback from some of the most skilled plain language writers in the industry. This feedback also includes broader points that apply across any writing they produce.

We were enthused when one client told us ‘we have changed our approach to communication and were encouraged by clients to enter’. It’s great to see our clients being encouraged in their plain language journeys by their own clients!

Some clients were happy to report that the Awards had been a morale boost for their teams after a couple of challenging years. One client told us that ‘our teams were delighted with their success at the Awards, genuinely happy. That says everything’.

Our judges felt they benefited from taking part too

Emma Fossey, one of our dedicated judges, said that she learnt a lot from taking part in the Awards. She sees her role as part of her professional development, which in turn allows her to provide a better service to her customers. Mary McLaughlin, another judge, said that judging was a great way to stay connected to the wider plain language community.

Taking part in the Awards helps organisations reflect on what their clients need. As Mary McLaughlin also pointed out, ‘thinking about how to write clearly and directly, and most importantly from a reader’s perspective, helps organisations think about the impact of their work and messages on others’. She went on to explain that ‘it’s a great way to help organisations be more aware of the real-life impact of their work on communities and to focus on what people need from them’.

The Awards publicly prove the value of plain language, and celebrate the entrants’ achievements.

Our entrants identified that submitting a piece of writing they were proud of was an opportunity to have it externally recognised.

Corey Farrell from Summer KiwiSaver Scheme saw entering the Awards as the last step in a journey — ‘from recognising a need, the development of content, to the delivery of useful information to our members’.

As well as this ‘pat on the back’ factor, entrants felt that recognition in the Awards gave them confidence that they were on the right track, and brought mana to their organisations. One winner said that it was ‘incredibly affirming and motivates us to continue as we have been’.

Our first online ceremony was a success.

We were delighted to run our first-ever online Awards ceremony on 14 October 2021, joined by people from around the world.

Our ceremony attendees particularly noted that our MC James Elliott did a fantastic job of keeping up a vibrant atmosphere in his presenting role. We want to take this opportunity to thank James again — as we all know after 2 years of ‘Zooming’, this is no easy task!

One of our winners, Sandra Ponen from Health Navigator, commented that the ceremony was of a very high standard, and although virtual, people were made to feel at ease and very welcome. Our major sponsor, Write Limited, was ‘delighted that all the winners were right there waiting to find out the result — proof that it was important to them and their organisation’.

We were thrilled to see that our supporters appreciated our commitment to the Awards and the effort involved to make it happen, despite many challenges along the way.

Survey responses

We’ve included the responses to our survey on the following pages.

# Survey responses — 2021 Plain English Awards

## Judges

What benefits do you believe the Awards bring to the people you serve or communicate with?

- Professionally, I learn a lot from taking part in the Awards — and that kind of continuing professional development directly benefits my customers.
- Importance of communicating in ways readers can understand and relate to.
- Motivation to communicate more clearly; promotion of best practices; kudos for a job well done.
- The Awards provide my clients and network with an opportunity to showcase plain language initiatives, and reinforce that their efforts are part of a wider shift to more useful written information.
- I don't do business in New Zealand. However, as part of the global community, I believe the Awards further validate the international priority on promoting plain language.
- They celebrate the achievement of organisations who are making an effort to be clear. They show that this work is noticed and appreciated.
- For the public, choices and the confidence that comes with understanding information put in front of them. For employers who ask their employees to write in plain English, the recognition that they are looking after their stakeholders.
- The Awards raise the profile of plain English and show people how it can help organisations connect with their communities.
- Entering the Awards means potentially receiving detailed feedback from some of the most skilled plain English writers in the industry. It's also a way to recognise the efforts some organisations put into plain English — if you're doing it well, no one notices, so it can be thankless.
- It makes people more conscious.

What benefits do you believe the Awards bring to the wider New Zealand and Australian public?

- By celebrating organisations that use Plain English, and incentivising those who may be thinking about it, the Awards encourage the use of clearer public information — an indisputable benefit to the New Zealand and Australian public.
- Education — that writing can be better — so they demand it more often; better, clearer communication to make life easier.

- The Awards promote the clear information the public needs, and provide people with an opportunity to show their efforts in this area. They also point them to organisations that prioritise clear information.
- I'm sure they reinforce the importance of using citizen language for civic engagement.
- They show how good things can be — hopefully this can lead to pressure on the laggards to do better.
- It puts the spotlight on a subject that if it's done well (writing in plain English) tends to be unnoticed. Bad writing sticks out like a sore thumb!
- Thinking about how to write clearly and directly, and most importantly from a reader's perspective, helps organisations think about the impact of their work and messages on others — it's a great way to help organisations be more aware of the real-life impact of their work on communities and to focus on what people need from them.
- When you reward great examples of plain English, I hope it makes organisations that haven't started their plain English journey sit up and pay attention. Just one organisation starting to write in plain English can change many clients' lives for the better.
- It shows that change is necessary AND possible!

When we asked you to be a judge, what motivated you to say yes?

- My first reason was that I thought the Awards were/are a fantastic way to encourage more organisations to use plain English — and that's my primary goal. My other reason was that I thought it be great for my professional development and for my business.
- Have been involved in plain English matters for over 20 years and wish to do what I can to further it.
- The opportunity to see what's being done out there, opportunity to contribute to my profession/industry, opportunity to work with colleagues from around the world.
- Just doing my bit on the long journey towards a norm of clear and useful information.
- Supporting and working with the great people at Write, being involved with the global plain language community, and supporting the awesome people of New Zealand.
- I was flattered to be asked, always ready to help the plain language movement, and really interested to see what's going on in New Zealand (I'm based in the UK).
- The opportunity to give people credit for the good and worthwhile work they do. To further the cause!
- Judging is a great way to stay connected to the plain English community and keep my skills up to scratch. I find it a really interesting process.
- Selfish reasons, mainly. I know I'm a great plain English writer and editor, but it's difficult to prove that to potential clients. Saying I've been a Plain English Awards judge communicates my level of experience well.
- My passion for plain language. I want to spread it all over the universe. Not only within my country (the Netherlands).

Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the Plain English Awards?

- I did find the turnaround time for the second stage of judging quite tight this year. But other than that, I really enjoy being part of it.
- Excellent! I hope the Awards continue, especially now it has expanded to Australia.
- I'd love to run similar Awards in Canada. We lag behind when it comes to plain English!
- Keep going. And I recommend we introduce a new focus on education. That's where it all starts off on the wrong foot, which is why I am delivering a new course in 2022 aimed at teachers.
- Keep doing what you're doing!
- Well done to the organisers. We could do with this in the UK.
- I really miss the glamour of past Award ceremonies which was an opportunity to dress up and mix with like-minded people! ;-)
- Melissa's comms and engagement with the judges was really outstanding — I could go to her with any problem and get a thoughtful, considered answer.

# Sponsors

What motivated you to sponsor the 2018 Plain English Awards?

- It was a win-win opportunity!
- To promote StyleWriter in New Zealand
- Belief in the Cause!

What are the benefits to your organisation of sponsoring the Awards?

- Promoting the cause. Giving clients something to be excited about. Alignment of my brand with a great kaupapa.
- Few, because there have been few sales resulting from the publicity.
- It's not easily measurable, but we need the people we collaborate with to understand that plain English is a 'thing' and important. We also need to show our staff that we value good writing.

What benefits do you believe the Awards bring to the people you serve or communicate with?

- Recognition for their great work.
- Raising awareness only.
- Awareness, and of course all the benefits that ensue when content is well-written.

What benefits do you believe the Awards bring to the wider New Zealand and Australian public?

- Promotion of clear communication — which, let's face it, should be a no brainer. But it's not, so... here we are.
- Raising awareness only.
- Awareness, and of course all the benefits that ensue when content is well-written.

Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the Plain English Awards?

- No
- Just keep it up — it's noble stuff.

# Winners, finalists, and other entrants

What motivated you to enter the Awards?

- A desire to receive objective validation that the work we've set out to complete is valuable.
- A desire to get recognition for our people who had made a huge effort to simplify our language when we communicate with clients.
- We have changed our approach to communication and were encouraged by clients to enter.
- A colleague suggested it, because the document we submitted is full of great, plain English content.
- Financial language can be overwhelming. It is our job as a KiwiSaver scheme to connect people with their money. We have aimed to do this in plain, accessible language and have worked with Write Ltd. since the launch of Summer to develop resources that meet the WriteMark plain language standard. Entering our document in the Awards was the end of the journey — from recognising a need, the development of content, to the delivery of useful information to our members.
- We liked our annual report, and wanted the opportunity to have it judged externally.
- Another team handled the entry process, so I didn't know about it until I was told that we were a finalist. On reflection, I think it's good to engage with an Awards process as part of striving to improve.
- We wanted to create an awareness of the need and importance for plain language resources in health care in Aotearoa New Zealand.

What benefits do you believe that being recognised in the Awards brings to your organisation? And how does the feedback from our judges benefit your writing?

- It's incredibly affirming and motivates us to continue as we have been.
- It is very useful to receive the judges' comments; they will help with our continuous improvement.
- For us this is evidence that we are on the right track with improving our communication. The comments encourage us to keep improving and suggested clear areas that we need to work on.
- It gives the organisation mana and shows that it follows best practice for documentation.
- We acknowledge that financial information can often be complex to communicate. Recognition in the Awards as either a finalist (or winner) has been a good representation of the Summer scheme's commitment to making KiwiSaver and to a broader extent, the financial services industry easier to understand.
- Because it vindicates our critics, and for external recognition.
- I'm unsure of the benefits to my organisation as we tend to like to hide our light under a bushel, but what it is likely to do is to encourage future teams within my organisation to strive to produce work that is in plain English, that is, reducing barriers to knowledge and understanding.



- The Awards are a fabulous platform to: 1. Create awareness on the importance of plain language. 2. Recognise those businesses and organisations who are making an effort to create simple, easy to read resources.

What benefits do you believe the Awards bring to the people you serve or communicate with?

- It drives trust between SCTI and our customers. It isn't just us saying we are trying to communicate better. Customers can see that independent bodies (the Awards and Write) endorse our content.
- Our teams were delighted with their success at the Awards, genuinely happy. That says everything.
- Our clients have the confidence that they receive reports that are meaningful for them.
- The Awards promote plain English and make it an important, nationally recognised 'thing'. This benefits the people we serve by letting them know it's OK to let go of the academic, jargon-filled style of communications that they have learned and be confident that using clear language does not equate to dumbing things down.
- The Awards are a measure of excellence in the use of plain language. By developing our resources with plain language at the front of our mind we seek to communicate information effectively with our members and the public. This is done with the aim of improving member outcomes. In the case of our *Transferring Australian superannuation to the Summer KiwiSaver scheme* booklet, our member outcomes have been to improve understanding of the transfer process, which translates to members being able to efficiently move money to Summer.
- The reports have been enormously important by presenting data to improve quality of trauma care.
- Striving to write in plain English reduces barriers to accessing essential information.

What benefits do you believe the Awards bring to the wider New Zealand and Australian public?

- Awareness that complex documents do not need to exist — companies can 'dejargonise' if they commit to the process.
- They encourage continuous improvement in the state sector in terms of communicating more clearly with New Zealanders who need help.
- The awareness of Plain English needs to be raised in New Zealand and Australia. The Awards play a key role here.
- By recognising the value of plain English, it generates a groundswell towards its widespread use. This means that the public will be able to easily understand important communications — sometimes it can mean the difference between life and death!
- The Awards highlight clear and effective communication through plain language. Good communication is at the heart of a business's success and is incredibly important, no matter the industry. Language helps people develop relationships. As more companies or organisations embrace a more plain and accessible style of communication, this then serves to benefit the public or the audience a business or organisation is trying to reach.

- Plain English is really important.
- It means that access to information that affects many can be understood. This has the potential to empower communities and increase the trust the public has in institutions.
- It was wonderful to see the efforts across Aotearoa New Zealand and I was very impressed to see the various categories and just how widespread an issue it is across all sectors.

Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the Plain English Awards?

- Thank you to the team who ran the Awards — I don't have any other suggestions.
- Just thanks for all your work. I thought your online event came off well. That was hard to do, but your front people delivered.
- Keep up the good work!!
- No — just keep up the good work! It gives us all something to strive for.
- Brilliant Awards process!

## Ceremony attendees

What motivated you to follow the Awards in 2021?

- I always follow the Awards since way back — I like to keep abreast of developments, callouts to high achievers (and playful shaming) for plain language.
- My colleague Kylie was a guest judge for the 2021 Awards and mentioned that it was a really great competition. Kylie encouraged me to sign up to watch the ceremony.
- Professional interest — I teach plain English editing.
- Wanting to learn more about something I'm passionate about.
- We had an entry.
- One of my employees is a judge for the Awards.
- Interested in the promotion of plain English in the health and education sectors.

If you entered the Awards, what motivated you to enter?

- I didn't enter as I wasn't aware of the Awards until my colleague Kylie mentioned it.
- A member of your organisation encouraged us to do so.
- Actually was coerced (gently) by a senior writer.

What benefits do you believe the Awards bring to the people you serve or communicate with?

- Awareness! Awareness! Awareness!
- Clear and succinct communication is vital for health and safety. When people understand and can grasp principles, the rewards can be unparalleled.
- A raised profile for plain English communication.
- I've been able to pass on that there is a collective that focuses on and celebrates people who write with Plain English in mind.
- Fostering plain English is a worthy endeavour.
- Promoting plain English communication so the receiver can easily understand what is being conveyed.
- A celebration of the 'art of plain English' and awareness of others in the game.

What benefits do you believe the Awards bring to organisations in New Zealand and Australia?

- It can help organisations to see local organisations trying to be better at this stuff
- A real desire to design communication packages that are understood and embraced by our organisations.
- A raised profile for plain English communication.
- Promotion of Plain English use through raising the profile.

- Simplification of communication.
- Promoting organisations to simplify their communications.
- Visibility of the value of clear communication via plain English.

What benefits do you believe the Awards bring to the wider New Zealand and Australian public?

- Again, awareness and hopefully encourage Jo public to not accept badly written content and push them for change.
- Clear and succinct goals that anyone can aspire to.
- Awareness of Plain English.
- Making communication more comprehensible.
- Encouraging organisations to maintain delivery of simpler, more understandable communications with the removal of jargon and terms which are not easily understood.
- When people can understand documentation, they are empowered to make better decisions for themselves.

Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the Plain English Awards?

- Keep up the great work!
- It was my first time attending and I learnt a lot. I liked the before and after examples given which provided interest between Awards.
- Great work. Keep doing it.
- Continue to promote the Awards to organisations.

# Write staff

## Awards survey questions

What motivated you to follow the Awards in 2021?

- I'm part of the Awards working group.
- Professional interest.
- As part of my work, I assist with the financial transaction processing of the Awards.
- Learning about plain language.

What benefits do you believe the Awards bring to the people you serve or communicate with?

- Being able to understand what they read, what they need to do, and not have to ask for clarification.
- Raising awareness of plain language across business/govt sectors. Recognition of the work put in by entrants and nominees.
- It helps raise the issue of the benefits of clear and precise language.
- Awareness of everyone fighting for plain language.

What benefits do you believe the Awards bring to organisations in New Zealand and Australia?

- Recognising their efforts of communicating clearly and effectively with their clients and the public.
- External recognition of organisational movement to adopting plain language.
- International recognition.
- Something to work towards... including a deadline!

Do you believe that the Awards are fulfilling their aim of bringing plain language into common use in New Zealand and Australia?

- Yes, the Awards are definitely becoming more well known in New Zealand. Hopefully Australia will sit up and take notice, and the public there will be more aware that they can expect plain English in all written communications.
- Yes, but it's slow progress.
- I believe so, judging from the amount of positive feedback the Awards have received.
- Not sure. I think it certainly helps, just no way to know how much.

Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the Plain English Awards?

- Keep up the great work!
- Such an important initiative.
- Perhaps get a major corporate with international recognition on board.

# Feedback on our online ceremony on 14 October

We'd love your feedback on the online ceremony of the Plain English Awards. It was our first time using an online platform so the more you can tell us the better!

Before the ceremony

**Did you get all the information you needed to register for the Awards ceremony?** Yes 34 / No 1

- (Other attendee) Was a simple process.
- (Other attendee) All good!

**Was it easy to register?** Yes 33 / No 1

- (Judge) Because of the time difference I didn't register.
- I viewed the video afterwards (although with much skimming through, I confess).
- (Finalist) The instructions were to include the category that were finalist for in our registration name. We were finalist in two categories ... a quick phone call clarified easily what we needed to do, but it wasn't clear in the initial instructions.
- (Other attendee) easy-peasy.
- (Other attendee) It was very easy to register.
- (Other attendee) Clear instructions.

The ceremony itself

**Was the ceremony what you expected?** Yes 26 / No 7

- (Judge) I didn't watch it so I can't comment.
- (Judge) Perhaps a little more 'oomph' but excellent given online difficulties etc.
- (Judge) Mainly because I wasn't sure what to expect. I missed 'seeing' the attendees.
- (Judge) I missed the ceremony due to work.
- (Judge) To be honest, I didn't watch all of the ceremony — my life is full of online experiences, and I didn't need another one!
- (Judge) I wasn't able to attend the ceremony.
- (Finalist) I think it was more seamless than I anticipated — we have all experienced the troubles of video meetings and we didn't face any of that.
- (Finalist) Yes. Having not attended before I did not know what sort of format to expect. It appeared very well run.
- (Finalist) It was better than I expected.
- (Finalist) I enjoyed the 'real world' snippets and examples you provided. Often we come across these things in our daily lives, but think 'it's probably just me who doesn't understand it'.
- (Other attendee) It was better than expected.
- (Other attendee) Would have liked to hear more from the winners about their organisations and the relevance of their entry.

- (Other attendee) Enjoyed the format and the MC's humour.
- (Other attendee) I was delighted that all the winners were right there waiting to find out the result — proof that it was important to them and their organisation.

**Was the length and pacing ok for you?** Yes 28 / No 6

- (Judge) It was okay, but was erring on the long side at a time when Zoom fatigue is a biggie. It's tricky to pull-off the lighter elements in Zoom. Hopefully we can have a live one next year and livestream for others.
- (Judge) A little long... but I was viewing the video and got impatient!

**What went well and what did you enjoy?**

- (Judge) I enjoyed the obvious commitment to and belief in the whole project by the organisers.
- (Judge) I particularly enjoyed hearing from the winners, and from the MP about the Plain Language Bill.
- (Judge) The overall tone was friendly, enthusiastic, and generous.
- (Judge) Didn't watch much.
- (Sponsor) Great MC as always. Jonny parts were cool!
- (Sponsor) James is always entertaining. I really liked that the winners got their moment to address the crowd. I thought the MP was on point and communicated well.
- (Finalist) I just enjoyed hearing from the other winners.
- (Finalist) The front people did very well at keeping it going — that wasn't easy.
- (Finalist) The length and pace of the session were good. Enjoyed the 'Brainstrain' examples as a bit of fun between some of the Awards.
- (Finalist) I enjoyed hearing the acceptance speeches and the MC did a stellar job despite not getting the audience vibe (for example, laughter) you would in person.
- (Finalist) The digital ceremony was very well run, with the graphics presentation order and presentations from the likes of Jonathan with the good versus bad.
- (Finalist) The MC was great, and Melissa was engaging and warm.
- (Finalist) I enjoyed the patter of the MC, the pacing of the Awards, and the guiding us through the process by the MC (helped to relax us into the process).
- (Finalist) Overall, the Awards ceremony was of a very high standard, and although virtual, people were made to feel at ease and very welcome.
- (Other attendee) The presentations were really engaging and I enjoyed listening to the stories that the prize winners shared.
- (Other attendee) I thought it went beautifully smoothly. I've seen some online Awards ceremonies over the last year or two that didn't go so well, so I was impressed! It was cool that you managed to keep the spontaneity of surprising the winners during the ceremony. I had to log off before the end, so I may have missed any major glitches in the last 15 minutes or so!
- (Other attendee) The before and after examples and the skill of the presenter. The recipients spoke well and were succinct.



- (Other attendee) Well scripted and stuck to time.
- (Other attendee) As an online ceremony thought the Awards went well.
- (Other attendee) Enjoyed hearing the behind-the-scenes stories from the winners.
- (Other attendee) Loved the rapport among the MC, Melissa, and Jonny. Loved the spontaneity of the winners and hearing them speak.
- (Other attendee) Good atmosphere of celebration, pretty smooth transitions, everyone so positive. Really enjoyed it.
- (Other attendee) Well paced, and great to hear all of the award-winners speaking!

**What didn't work so well? (We know there were a few glitches!)**

- (Judge) Nothing major. A couple of online hiccups, but perhaps better instructions for Submittable.
- (Judge) The filler stuff is tricky online. I think short and sweet works best on Zoom.
- (Judge) Didn't notice.
- (Judge) Missed it.
- (Judge) Didn't watch much.
- (Sponsor) Meh. Nothing unmanageable.
- (Sponsor) The crowd noise emulator detracted from the event — but I guess you know that. I can't think of anything else.
- (Finalist) I didn't see the glitches!
- (Finalist) Transitions between the various speakers could have been a wee bit smoother.
- (Finalist) It felt a bit repetitive, with similar remarks for the many categories.
- (Finalist) Some of the presenters' audio after the drum roll/announcements was difficult to hear, aside from that I had no issues.
- (Finalist) Some of the Write interlude, for example, on complicated English, were unnecessarily long.
- (Finalist) The applause was a bit delayed and quite loud in comparison to the speaking — it got a bit tedious to listen to and fiddle with the controls to toggle the volume. Wondering if a bit of music might be better, as long as it isn't too loud.
- (Finalist) I don't have any complaints.
- (Other attendee) The audio effects :-). Even if they hadn't glitched, in general I don't believe they add to an event.
- (Other attendee) Nothing I can think of.
- (Other attendee) The canned applause often went over the announcement of the winner's name.
- (Other attendee) The canned applause didn't really work at all. Timing could have been slicker, but of course it was the first time.

- (Other attendee) Nothing I can recall. If the survey had been closer to the event, I may have recalled something.
- (Other attendee) Not much. Would have liked the winners comments to feel more spontaneous — like at the Emmys!
- (Other attendee) Given circumstances thought they went well.
- (Other attendee) Unfortunately the canned applause didn't work.
- (Other attendee) Just the applause/confetti thing got in the way a bit.
- (Other attendee) The speakers were always in the top corner of the screen. The slides were the main focus of the screen. It should have been the other way around so we could see the speakers more easily. Great host!

And for next time

**Do you prefer the Awards ceremony to be online or in person?** Online: 18 / In person: 18

**We know there are benefits to both. Please tell us what you'd prefer and explain why.**

- (Judge) In person. As I am in Scotland, UK, and unlikely ever to attend a ceremony, my comments here are simply general observations. I think it's always better to be there in person because it's easier to mingle and meet people. However, I think it was absolutely right to hold it online on this occasion.
- (Judge) In person. I live in Australia so have never experience 'in person'. I would like to come over next time if that's possible.
- (Judge) In person. I think we're all sick of Zoom and the like!
- (Judge) In person. I'm over Zoom! And plain language is a movement that needs the fuel of being in the same room with others working so hard often for little reward.
- (Judge) I think a hybrid could probably work well, especially for those of us in other countries.
- (Judge) I imagine it would be better in person, as people could network and it would help to build community. But posting highlights as a recording would be good too.
- (Judge) In person. Nothing beats the buzz of a real event — but obviously you just have to do what you have to do in a pandemic!
- (Judge) Online is best for me :)
- (Sponsor) In person. Humans. In the same room. Can't beat it.
- (Sponsor) Honestly, I'm 50-50 on this. It's a hell of a lot cheaper and easier to attend online, but I've always really enjoyed attending — meeting people, chatting, the hospitality and entertainment, etc. So, I'll continue to support you either way.
- (Finalist) Online. I think online removes distractions of people around tables although there's something wonderful to be in a room with people and being able to 'network' with similar minded organisations.
- (Finalist) In person. I enjoy the social aspect of in person, especially being around other people who love and appreciate plain English as much as I do.

- (Finalist) In person makes the Awards I feel like more of an 'event'. While COVID and border restrictions meant in person was not tenable this year the online event served a purpose. It would be great to celebrate the Awards in future with the people representing the organisations nominated as finalists.
- (Finalist) Online. Love in person events but online works well around work pressures.
- (Finalist) I didn't mind the online. I thought it worked really well, and I loved the convenience.
- (Other attendee) Online. I would like to see more and more opportunities for online ceremonies like this. Not just for Covid times, but for environmental (and traffic congestion) reasons. If online events have some kind of interactivity the better, for example, ways for real time participation with voting, applauding/showing appreciation, sections with ability to ask questions, breakout rooms for attendee virtual networking, etc. If only drinks and nibbles could be delivered by UberEats too lol.
- (Other attendee) Because I can schedule it into my calendar and not have to leave the office to enjoy the Awards.
- (Other attendee) More access for people from all over NZ (and Australia). I probably wouldn't have gone to an in-person event.
- (Other attendee) It was easy to attend and free. A combination of a live feed would be great to allow people to attend and those who can't to still watch.
- (Other attendee) Face-to-face communication is best and online only if necessary.
- (Other attendee) Online gives the benefit of more people being able to attend. Travel and other costs may limit in person participation.
- (Other attendee) Less travel and time away from family and work, less mingling with others in this crazy pandemic.
- (Other attendee) Love the buzz and excitement of the in-person ceremony. The peak of what we've been planning all year!
- (Other attendee) Online gets away from the Wellington-centric thing (and meant we could include the Aussies). Perhaps a Wellington event with people Zooming in from other places? We are so much more aware of the possibilities of including people now!
- (Other attendee) Easier to connect — no travel involved.
- (Other attendee) You can be noisier in person. But online allows more people to attend both casually and internationally.